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ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WILL SAVE MUNICIPALITIES MONEY

Pilot Project to make Drinking Water and Wastewater Plants More Efficient, Less Costly

FALMOUTH – Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles today joined Commissioner Laurie Burt of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), local officials, and legislators to announce an Energy Management Pilot for Wastewater and Drinking Water Plants, a program that will help 13 municipalities make their water treatment plants more energy efficient, saving money for the municipalities and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

MassDEP will take the lead among public and utility partners that will work in concert to audit energy use at municipal wastewater and drinking water facilities – a major contributor to overall energy consumption for many municipalities – assess the potential for clean, renewable energy at these facilities; and provide financial support for implementation of energy upgrades. Partners in this project include the Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources (DOER), US Environmental Protection Agency Region I, NStar, National Grid/KeySpan, Bay State Gas, Cape Light Compact, Western Massachusetts Electric, Unitil, Berkshire Gas, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the University of Massachusetts–Amherst's Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, and the Consortium on Energy Efficiency.

"Drinking water and wastewater treatment are vital services for protecting public health, but they consume large amounts of energy and drain municipal budgets," said Secretary Bowles. "This pilot project will help a first round of municipalities reduce their energy use and save money for their customers – and lead the way for others to do the same."

"MassDEP regulates water treatment to ensure environmental quality, but we also want to help treatment facilities reach the highest standards of water quality at the lowest cost, and with the lowest emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants that come from power generation," said

Commissioner Burt. “Working with our partners, MassDEP can help communities save money and make their water treatment operations greener at the same time.”

Statewide, cities and towns spent approximately $150 million per year for electricity in the course of treating 662 billion gallons of wastewater and drinking water. In Massachusetts, approximately 30 percent of municipal energy use comes from water treatment. If energy use in municipal water treatment were reduced by 20 percent across the board, emissions from power generation would be reduced by approximately 200,000 tons of carbon dioxide; 760,000 pounds of sulfur dioxide; and 250,000 pounds of nitrous oxides.

The Energy Management Pilot Project will:

- develop energy management plans for 13 local and regional facilities with the goal of reducing the cost of treating wastewater and drinking water by 20 percent;
- develop models for integrating public funding assistance (including MassDEP’s State Revolving Fund, the Division of Energy Resources’ Energy Conservation Improvement and Alternative Energy Fund, and Mass. Technology Collaborative’s Renewable Energy Trust) to fund or supplement local capital funding for energy upgrades, which can often run $300,000 for efficiency upgrades alone; and
- pave the way for other municipalities to make the operations of their wastewater and drinking water treatment plants more energy efficient.

Today’s announcement came at Falmouth’s Long Pond Surface Water Treatment Facility, one of the pilot project facilities, which is a model plant that is in the process of integrating efficiency improvements and renewable energy into its operations.

“The town is pleased and honored to be recognized for its efforts,” said Raymond Jack, Director of Public Works for Falmouth. “We look forward to working with the state on this pilot program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve efficiencies for the betterment of the communities and the environment.”

“"The Cape Light Compact is pleased to return local ratepayer dollars in assisting the towns on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard in implementing energy efficiency measures to reduce electricity consumption in the crucial areas of drinking water supply and waste water treatment,” said Robert Mahoney, Chairman of the Governing Board for the Compact. “Over the last several years, Cape Light Compact has invested over $800,000 in water and wastewater energy efficiency projects, which has resulted in over 1.7 million kilowatt-hours in annual electricity savings and reduced system demand by 650 kilowatts."

“Finding ways to reduce emissions and make our municipal wastewater and drinking water plants more cost-effective are essential pieces in creating a solid energy plan for the future of the Commonwealth,” said Senate President Therese Murray. “I am pleased that the Administration understands that these challenges are even greater on Cape Cod, and has chosen Falmouth to be one of the pilot communities for this program.”

“Energy efficiency measures for Falmouth’s water facilities are obvious answers to our ever growing municipal energy costs, which are about $5 million annually,” said Representative Matthew Patrick. “They are also indicative of the potential for energy savings in municipal government today.”

“Falmouth has consistently been in the forefront of energy conservation and renewable energy, so it’s entirely appropriate that DEP is working with the town on this important project,” said Representative Eric Turkington.

Other municipalities whose water treatment facilities have been selected for the project include Ashland, Easton, Lee, New Bedford, Townsend and Worcester (Water Supply Division). Regional and local wastewater treatment operations selected include the Barnstable Treatment Facility, the Charles River Pollution Control District (Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Medway, Millis, Norfolk, Sherborn, and Wrentham); the Falmouth Treatment Facility; the Lowell Regional Wastewater Utility (Chelmsford, Dracut, Lowell, Tewksbury, and Tyngsboro); the Pittsfield Treatment Facility; and Upper Blackstone Wastewater Pollution Control District (Auburn, Holden, Millbury, Rutland, West Boylston and Worcester).

The cost of implementing the pilot program is estimated at $326,000, with the funding coming from the utilities’ energy efficiency incentive programs, the DOER Energy Conservation Improvement Program, the existing MTC Renewable Energy Trust grant and financial assistance programs, the State Revolving Fund 2-percent loan program, and other sources.

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